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PRIZE COMPETITION IN INTERIOR DECORATION.

MESSRS. JOSEPH P. McHUGH & CO., Interior Architects and Decorators, New York, with the view of encouraging the study of interior decoration after pure styles, offer six subjects for competition in THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER. The competition began with the October, 1890, issue, which also commenced the seventeenth volume of our journal. A prize of TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS will be paid by the above firm, for the best original design in the following special styles of ornamental construction and decorative treatment:

LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR COMPETITION.

October, 1890,	-	A COLONIAL RECEPTION ROOM.
		Prize awarded to James Thomson, of Boston.
December, "	-	AN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE DINING ROOM.
		Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
February, 1891,	-	A LOUIS SEIZE DRAWING ROOM.
		Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
April, "	-	A ROMANESQUE HALL.
June, "	-	AN ADAMS LIBRARY.
August, "	-	A LOUIS QUINZE BOUDOIR.

CONDITIONS.

1.—Each competitive design must be 15 inches by 10 in size. The drawing must be executed by the pen in black ink, and sent us flat, not rolled up.

2.—Each drawing must be original, and should include suggestions for wall decoration, draperies and furniture, after the style of its period, but adapted to modern construction and requirements.

3.—Each drawing must be signed with a *nom de plume*, and accompanied by a letter giving the real name and address of the designer. All designs must be addressed to the Editor of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, 150 Nassau Street, New York, and must reach the office not later than the 15th of the month previous to that for which the competition is announced; thus, drawings for the April, 1891, competition, should reach the Editor not later than the 15th of March 1891.

REPLYING to several correspondents who have written us on the subject of our fourth Prize Competition, viz.: A Romanesque Hall, we beg to say that the Hall means the rectangular, or square hall, of an ordinary private house and not a public hall of any kind. The competition is restricted to domestic interiors.

MR. FRANKLIN W. SMITH of Boston has conceived an idea, which, if carried into practical effect, would make an epoch in the intellectual life of the people of the United States. His idea is to establish a National Gallery of History and Art at Washington, the various buildings, with their dependencies forming a town of themselves to be named "Istoria." The idea is the evolution of the study, travel and practical experience of forty years as an architect and traveler. The design of this institution is colossal in its proportions, and its range of construction will surpass in extent all other previous constructions of mankind. Mr. Smith is an architect and owner of the archaeological museum known as "The Pompeia" at Saratoga Springs, New York, and of the private residence known as the "Villa Zorayda" at St. Augustine, Florida, and he is naturally the man to conceive the idea of the National Gallery and he has addressed himself with enthusiasm toward the realization of a work that will certainly cost him his life-time to inaugurate.

What will be the special features of the proposed National Gallery of History and Art?

There will be a range of courts appropriated to the grand divisions of history. There will be Assyrian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine courts, and there will be restored reproductions of the Parthenon at Athens, the villa of Hadrian at Rome, with triumphal arches and votive columns. There will also be a Moorish court, adorned with traceries from the Alhambra.

There will be constructed a vast number of architectural models, including topographical models of cities such as Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Heliopolis and Babylon. There will also be a series of galleries and corridors for pictures, casts, etc. A special feature will be a series of historical paintings, setting forth in realistic and truthful form the events of history in the order in which they occurred. There will be also an Archaeological Museum of carvings, bronzes, mosaics, tapestries, armor, potteries, inscriptions, bas-reliefs, engravings, coins, etc., which will illustrate as far as possible the historical periods in their chronological progress by means of art and archaeological remains. Collateral to this, by means of lessons in history and art, there will be wall charts of the progress of civilization and its geographical demarcations of various periods; the history of the migration and improvement, population, rise and fall of Empires will be graphically delineated, giving interest to the trite details, and raising enquiry that would incite study. Of course there will be an immense library, rivaling that of the British Museum.

Mr. Smith has calculated that the buildings, galleries, and other accessories would cost at least ten millions of dollars for their erection. The institute he proposes to be erected upon a range of hills in the suburbs of Washington, the park being not less than 250 acres in extent.

How is the money to be raised to defray the cost of this gigantic undertaking? Mr. Smith proposes that at least ten wise men of the day will be found who will contribute one hundred thousand dollars, thus supplying the million dollars required for the construction of the Roman and Greek courts. The courts would contain monuments to the honor of the Ten Wise Men that would subscribe this amount. The constituency of the institute will be as follows: First, Founders—those who give or bequeath one hundred thousand dollars, or upward; Second, Benefactors—those who give or bequeath one thousand dollars, or upward; Third, Patrons—those who give one hundred dollars or upward; Fourth, Members—those who contribute ten dollars or upward; Fifth, Donors—those who give or bequeath paintings, or objects in furtherance of its aims.

Another expedient has been suggested, namely, the issue of bonds at a low rate of interest—three or four per cent.—the income being secured by charges for admission at a low rate, sufficient to provide the bonded interest. It is a striking fact in proof of the necessity of such an institution, that the United States is the only Power in the world, great or minor, that has not created its National Gallery, and that does not support it by the most liberal appropriations. England has the South Kensington Museum; France, its Louvre; Italy its Museums in Rome, Naples and Florence, and even Sweden and Denmark have their National Galleries. Such an institution is a supreme necessity for the people of the United States. There are millions of citizens who will never have the opportunity of traveling in Europe, or other countries to explore, the treasures of art, who could find an opportunity to travel to Washington and there study the very complete collection of artistic and architectural casts, reproductions and restorations of the most beautiful works of the centuries, contemplated by the idea of a National Gallery.

The National Gallery of History and Art is an institution

intended to be for the people themselves. The idea is eminently unselfish and noble and its realization will crown the man that conceived it with undying fame. We sincerely hope that those of our readers who are in a position to render material aid to so grand a cause will come forward and sustain Mr. Smith in his enterprise. The age is a mercenary one and in the universal quest of material prosperity the education and enrichment of the mind is forgotten. Art is that which makes life worth living, for without art man is a savage, a barbarian. Sentiment, imagination, idea, manipulative skill, these should be the ruling forces of life with gold as their slave. What far-reaching satisfaction do we not obtain when man's spirit and higher nature is lord of life! Let us study how the intellectual races of antiquity realized happiness in their surroundings, how glorious was their art. Let us have the opportunity for such study by erecting a National Gallery and Museum of Art in the United States.

MR. W. P. P. LONGFELLOW, in an article entitled "The Architect's Point of View" in the January, 1891, issue of "Scribner's Magazine," criticises the popular demand for decorative art as opposed to the arts of form and design, *i. e.* Architecture. "The thing that most attracts the people," he states, "is the ornamental and the realistic. Color, ornamental effect and decorative material are in demand, but sculpture, which is the art of form, does not exist, and the essential qualities of Architecture, which are opposed to mere bulk of ornament, are under an eclipse. Architecture, which is more absolutely creative than any other art which lives only in design, has its distinguishing feature ignored. Form is lost in its mere decoration, and buildings are covered with turrets, gables, chimneys, dormers, bay windows, fullness of color, coarseness of materials, etc., to make them picturesque, which is only a side show of Architecture. In earlier days Architecture and Sculpture were the dominant arts. The great masters of the Renaissance were Architects and Sculptors, as well as Decorators, and their greatest paintings were combined with Architecture and allied themselves to it by natural affinity; partaking of its firmness, its balance, its orderly arrangement, its repose. These painters felt the need of strongly marked and rigid architectural features to bear out the composition of their frescoes, and reconcile them to the buildings to which they were applied.

The true method of interior decoration is that in which the architect, the decorator, the tapestry painter, the upholsterer and the designer of stained glass have had an equal share. The only variation given to the flatness of interiors to-day is that produced by the builder who adds to the trimming of the walls, doors and windows, a wooden mantelpiece, and if the room is a library, a bookcase built in a niche in the wall. But mere trimmings, or bookcases are no substitute for the architectural breaking up of walls and ceilings, with great play of light and shadow, transforming a flat environment into a dream of beauty. The art of interior decoration is to-day as narrow as the city house itself, which is largely responsible for the "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable" introduction of new tricks in wall-hangings and plastic relief to atone for the lack of constructive beauty.

Who will be our guide to show us the correct method of interior adornment. Our style of building houses in telescope fashion on a twenty-five foot lot is at the root of the whole matter. In New York there are thousands of houses too small, too narrow, to admit of the use of interior architecture, but which cost more to build and furnish than much larger detached houses, properly decorated, would cost out of the city. New York house owners are ground under the heels of real estate men, and their case is hopeless, but how shall the owners of millions of houses throughout the country be educated as to the proper enrichment? In our investigation of this point for the benefit of our readers we have come across the work of one of the greatest architects and decorators of the age, M. A. Sandier of Paris. His work is at once rich, new and appropriate, and seems to us to be the *summum bonum* of decorative art. We have begun in the present issue of the journal the publication of his articles on "The Modern House," reproduced from the *Revue Illustrée*. He tells his own story in clear and forcible language, while the decorative charts prepared by him leave nothing to be desired, and nothing in doubt as to his ideas in all their details.

The first instalment of this most important subject concerns itself naturally with a description of the house he proposes to decorate and furnish, illustrated by plans and elevations of the building. Our readers may expect a rich feast in these articles, and we assure them their anticipations will not be disappointed.